

Number 34

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# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION..

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Thursday, April 29. 1707.

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**I**N the Pursuit of the Subject I am upon, of the Conjunction of Men as well as Nations, I am very happily interrupted by the QUEEN's Proclamation for a general Thanksgiving for this Blessed Beginning; and according to the old very laudable Custom, *a Jove principium*, Her Majesty Begins the Government of this great Monarchy at the right End, *Viz.* At the Gates of Heaven by a publick Thanksgiving.

I shall not here enter into any of their Scruples, who are not for giving Thanks for the Union, my Business is not to quarrel with those that cannot, but to excite those that can. — The greatest Difficulty will lie with those, who own the Blessing, and yet give no Thanks for it. — Those, who doubt yet of its being a Blessing, may in Time be convinc'd, and then they will frankly come in to all our Thanksgivings;

but we have a Sort of People, who are forward enough to acknowledge the Mercy in their Discourse, grasp the Advantages, and close with the Union, as a thing, they are convinc'd, is for the general Good — But not one Word of Thankfulness — Meer *Samaritans*! Ten of them shall accept the Cure, to One that shall come back to be thankful.

Well, Gentlemen, if you won't do your Duty, look to it, it will be none of the QUEEN's Fault; Her Majesty is not the Governor only, but the Guide and Example of her People; and as this is a thing something new in these Kingdoms, I cannot but take this Occasion to make a few Remarks upon it.

If we pass by this and the last Reign, I hardly know, whither we shall run back, before we shall find the least Example in the

the Court fit to imitate; Drunkenness, Lewdness, and all Manner of Wickedness have been the Patterns of the Court, and the Court Politicks were guided by I know not what infernal Influence, to run the Nation into general Debaucheries, as the properest Method to bring all Religion into Contempt, and consequently to make the People the easier to be seduc'd to *Romish* Errors and profligate Manners.

Nay, we find the very People themselves, as if guided by some original Modesty, hardly to be perswaded to be so wicked, as they would have them; I care not to run into the black List of those ruinous Times, and the Abominations of *Sundays Sport-Books*, Court Revels, Royal Vices, and the like.

But now the Tables are turn'd, Vice is discourag'd by Example as well as Law, and the QUEEN gently takes Subjects by the Hand to Heaven's Gate: And what shall we say now——Will ye not follow? Never complain of the former Times——Would your Kings in those Times hurry you into Extremes of Vice? Would they discourage all they saw in their Subjects, which might look like Morality, much less Religion? Did they give them horrid Examples, that are hardly fit to repeat, and which with their other Crimes should be bury'd in their Graves, if we have any kind Thoughts for their Memories——Complain no more, here is a Royal Example of another Kind; and 'tis hard to say, any Body should be careless enough of the mighty Benefit to resist, neglect, or put any Contempt on such an Example as this.

Who would think, any Body should want pressing to joyn heartily in this happy Thanksgiving——What can our Differences in Religion concern this——Are you of various Opinions, Gentlemen, and cannot you go to the same Worship, or to the same Place of Worship? Do as the Men of *Tarboish* did, let every Man call upon his GOD; Difference of Religion made no Scruple upon their Minds at such a Time as that, but they all came about poor *Jonah* with a general Cry, *Arise, call upon thy GOD*; they never ask'd what GOD it might be, but let it be what GOD it would, their Case was

desperate, and any GOD; that would help them, would be welcome to them.

Are you of differing Opinions, differing Churches? Do you pray, and sing, and give Thanks differing Ways——Unhappy Breach! But let it be so as to this, 'tis nothing to the Purpose. Go, Gentlemen——Go, and give Thanks your own Way, do but give Thanks——And for Shame, and for preventing the general Reproach upon Christianity, never receive such an universal Blessing as this, without expressing, in as publick a Manner as possible, your Acknowledgement to Heaven. For it was all his Work, all the Agency of Instruments, all the Vigilance, Conduct, and Prudence of the great Mannager of it, the Lord High-Commissioner, and the rest of the Gentlemen concern'd, tho' it deserves a just Remembrance, and shall always meet with it from me; yet it had been conquer'd, rabbled, countermin'd and defeated; the whole Fabrick had been overthrown, and become abortive, if the singular and remarkable Influences of Providence had not brought it to pass; and of this I shall be larger else where.

Providence has without doubt its secret Agency in every Action, whether publick or private, of Men, Families, or Nations in the World; but there are *some Fundures* of Time, *some Transactions*, *some Critical Things*, which seem more especially his Care, and which seem therefore more particularly to merit our Observation; and if ever this Island can experience one so remarkably qualify'd in that Respect as this, I am mistaken.

Of what sort of Temper those Gentlemen are, that cannot give Thanks for this Union upon a *Party-Account*, I cannot positively resolve, nor shall I point this Paper at them at all, saving by way of brief Remark——Methinks the Union has a vast variety of things in it, for us to be thankful for, tho' there were nothing in it relating to the several Parties or Distinctions among us; and of this I shall speak more largely in my next. I am now pressing us to unite in giving Thanks, let our respective Differences as to the Manner, be what they will; and methinks this is a Theme so large, an  
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Argument so fruitful, and a Subject so generally agreeable, that I should need to say little upon it.

'Tis a strange Dilemma this Paper is brought to, and who can steer steady, when the shifting Winds toss the Ship thus from Side to Side? *One Side I am told*, The Dissenters in *England* are inclining to *Episcopacy*, and are not to be Trusted by the Church of *Scotland* — On the other hand, The Dissenters are all entering into Associations with the *Scots*, and *Episcopacy* will be pull'd down. Here, I am told, I say too much for them, of their Willingness to Conform to the Church of *England*; There, *WHO'D A THOUGHT IT?* I place them at an irreconcilable Distance from the Church — strange! What shall we say now, if both these Charges are true?

1. 'Tis true, that the Dissenters in *England*, I mean *Protestant Dissenters*, would with all their Hearts, Conform, Join with their Brethren the National Church, and be all One Church of *England*, would that Church Reform or Abate, Alter or Remove what they retain, which *the Other* think Unscriptural; I do not say, *which is so*, but *which they think so*; because 'tis not the Business of this Paper to enter into that Dispute; the Text might, with the help of a little Charity, set them to Rights there.

2. 'Tis as true, That unless these things can be abated, the Dissenters can never Conform or Come in — and let no Man cry, *Who'd have thought it?* at this; for there is no Impossibility in it, unless they will lay it on their Side that should abate — And I persuade myself they will not do that.

For my part, I am far from despairing of a General Union among Christians; and I know, that when it pleases GOD to restore the Authority of Conscience, Charity, and Love, and with it an enlightned and sound Judgment, we shall certainly come to such Conjunctions in Matters of Religion, as may consist with a whole United Congregation of faithful Christians; and I leave it till then.

In the mean time, I say, the Union has brought us all to such a Settlement, as that Conforming to one another is no more the

Dispute, our Differences are no more the Subject of our Debates — The present Affair is, to have every Party Legally Establish'd, firmly Fenc'd against one another, duly Limited and Restrict'd by Bounds of Interest, Property, and Law; That Encroachments on all hands may cease, and we may no more be afraid of one another.

And this is one of the blessed Effects of the Union; This is one of the things we have to be thankful for — and this is also One thing which I say all the Parties may join in to be thankful for — Nay, it must be Matter of Scandal to any Party of Men, to say they cannot join here — For he that is not content with a Legal Security of the Privileges he enjoys, from the Encroachments of others, on the Condition of being restrain'd from encroaching upon others, must at the same time allow People to suppose, he designs or desires the Liberty of Invading or Encroaching upon the Liberties or Rights of Others; And let him that likes to have this Consequence drawn upon him, take it for his Pains.

I cannot therefore but wonder, any Protestants can shun their Acknowledgments for the Union; and I must own it shocks my Opinion of their Morals — I mean, here among the People that appear Discontent upon such Principles as above.

But I wave these People, they merit some Pity, and more Contempt; 'tis because of them we ought to be the more thankful, since all the Men of Conscience, the Men of Liberty, the Men of Peace, and that ought to be valued, are deliver'd by this from the Depredations of a Party, whose Design was to devour us all, not as a Church only, but as a Nation, and to deliver us up bound Hand and Foot, to a Foreign, a *French*, a Popish and a Tyrannizing Generation.

To these People therefore, I did not purpose to speak much, but to those who seem pleas'd with the Union; who act as *Englishmen*, profess a Love of Liberty, profess to seek Security, to covet Peace, to be pleas'd with the Currency of Justice, and the Sovereignty of the Law, and yet cannot give Thanks.

These.

These Men can have no Excuse—Unless we shall be allow'd to suppose them asking so ignorant a Question as this, *What have to be thankful for?* And because I have found some People so infatuated among us in both Nations, I shall speak a Word or two to such in my next.

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